

Historic, archived document

Do not assume content reflects current
scientific knowledge, policies, or practices.

HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 11, 1939

(FOR BROADCAST USE ONLY)

SUBJECT: "CLOTHING NEWS NOTES." Information from the Office of Experiment Stations, U.S.D. A.

---ooOoo---

Before long you'll be thinking about spring clothes. Before long the sewing machine will be humming in many a home, and the scissors will be snipping, and the annual spring dressmaking job will be underway.

So today the news is about clothing for the family. It comes from experiment stations in many different States. Some of this news may be helpful to you when you start outfitting your family for spring.

Perhaps you've wondered what fabrics farm housewives use most in dressmaking. According to the first figures from six Northeast States cooperating on a study of wear in dress fabrics, cotton and rayon are most popular with wool and silk or mixtures running at some distance behind. Farm housewives in these New England and Atlantic States have been sending in samples of new goods which they've been making into dresses. These samples are tested by workers at the Pennsylvania Station who then predict how the fabric will wear. The women check on these predictions as they wear the dress. They keep records of how often they wash or clean it and how satisfactorily it wears. When the dress is finally discarded, it also goes to the Pennsylvania laboratory for inspection. Eventually, the records should give a pretty good idea of the fabrics that wear best. As yet they only show the fabrics that women in these States use most. Out of a total of 600 samples already tested, more than 200 were cotton, nearly that many were rayon, and the rest were silk or wool or mixtures.

Now here's a little news about two common cotton fabrics. If you are choosing between poplin or broadcloth, poplin will probably give you the best service. These two fabrics, both used in nurses' uniforms, recently had a thorough check-up by Helen Larmere of the Minnesota Station. She found that poplins do not shrink as much as broadcloths; that poplins were more durable; and that poplins made by different manufacturers did not vary so much in quality as the broadcloths did.

Speaking of differences in quality reminds me of another news note, this one from Kansas and about the wearing quality of women's silk bias slips. She found that the silk in the slips on the market is very different. Slips of poor quality showed the greatest differences in fabric and in wear. Slips of heavily weighted silk were some of the first to give out. The more weighting, the shorter the life of the slip. Miss Ekstrom also found that warp threads rather than filling threads are the first to give way from wear.

You may have noticed that after wearing a slip for awhile, it began to show here and there below your skirt--to hang unevenly. That's a common fault in bias



2/11/39

slips, so Miss Ekstrom found. She reported only one make of slip that hold its shape and hung evenly along the hem as long as it was worn. (Now that straight slips are coming back into style, women may be relieved of that one clothing trouble.)

Another interesting fact that came to light in this study was the wearing effect of laundering. Slips that were washed only after four days of wear lasted longer than those laundered every day or two.

Here's a little news from Missouri about readymade garments. Some 4 thousand housewives in that State last year reported to their State textile worker what qualities they wanted in readymade house dresses, afternoon dresses, slips, petticoats, and stockings; and how well the stores supplied these wants.

Their reports indicated that the stores have been doing a good job of supplying attractive clothes and fabrics, but not such a good job on the construction and fit of the clothes, or the shrinkage of the fabric. These Missouri homemakers said they wanted well-constructed, properly-fitted garments, and preshrunk, color-fast, good-quality fabrics. They also listed other needs. For the lower-income families one great need is an attractive, serviceable but cheaper fiber. Another is better rayon fabrics. The women also said they needed better labels on fabrics and garments, standard sizes in readymade garments, special sizes to fit common problem figures; and salespeople with better training in fitting.

High price and good wearing quality do not always go together in cotton fabrics for children's clothing. That was the conclusion of Olivia Smenner of the Arkansas Station after she had tested many samples of nainsook, broadcloth and cotton suiting costing from 11 cents a yard on up to 65 cents a yard. She found that the most expensive fabrics were lighter in weight, smoother in finish, thinner in texture, and more even in yarn and weave, but they would tear and break more easily than most of the cheaper fabrics. The coarsest yarns proved to be the strongest. But many of the low-priced materials had other disadvantages. Most of them had filling threads that stretched too much, for example.

Perhaps you'd be interested to know what garments farm families are likely to buy and which ones are most often made at home. A Texas study recently showed that practically all garments for men and boys are purchased readymade. The articles most frequently made at home are women's house dresses, aprons, street dresses, and girls' school dresses and undergarments. As families have less money to spend, housewives do more sewing at home. Also the larger the family, the more home sewing and the fewer readymade garments in the wardrobe. You may be interested to know that younger women in these Texas families did more sewing than older women, and that women who had been trained in sewing, made a considerable saving on family clothing costs by dressmaking at home.

